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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [KNNP](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAN HINTING AT TEMPORARY SUSPENSION?

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REASON: 1.4 (d)

1.(C) Based on recent public statements, it is possible that Iran is laying the groundwork to accept a suspension to its enrichment activities. If true, Iran is likely to justify this action by stressing the temporary nature of the suspension, to last only as long as negotiations are productive. In this way, Iran would assert that this step does not contradict its position that the nation will not forego its "rights" to produce its own fuel. At the same time, Iran is clearly keeping the door open to negotiations to try to discourage immediate action from the P5-1 on sanctions.

2.(U) After President Ahmadinejad in New York said Iran is willing to negotiate under undefined "fair" and "just" conditions, Iranian FM Mottaki, also in New York, said that "Iran is currently seeking a way to make balance between its rights and its commitments." At the same time, Mottaki criticized UNSC action on Iran as illegitimate and accused it of interfering in countries' internal affairs, as reported by IRNA. AP reported that Mottaki said talks between top Iranian and European negotiators on his country's disputed nuclear program are "on track," and he believes a negotiated solution to the standoff is possible. He told reporters that European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani would hold their third meeting "very soon," probably in Europe, though he did not give a date or location.

3.(U) Editorial board member of the conservative Iranian newspaper Resalat, Amir Mohebbian, indicated possible Iranian willingness to suspend its uranium enrichment activities -- but only a timed and limited suspension while negotiations take place. He also said US involvement in negotiations could be beneficial, in an interview with ISNA (Iranian Students News Agency), as printed in reformist Aftab-e Yazd September 24, 2006. Mohebbian claimed Iran has always said it is not opposed to suspension for a limited period of time while negotiations are in progress, without elaborating how such a suspension would be verified. Iran must be certain that negotiations will be resolved in a short period of time, and that after the international sides have obtained confidence and assurance about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, it can resume activities. At the same time, he asserted that removing Iran's file from the UNSC was "not one of the main preoccupations" of Iran. More important to Iran are its rights, he said, and what is even more important is negotiations and diplomacy.

4.(U) On US participation in negotiations, Mohebbian said that the US has always tried to disrupt Iran's negotiations. If the US instead enters directly into negotiations, gives guarantees

about outcomes, focuses on legal and technical aspects of the IAEA, and ceases "unacceptable political maneuvers," the presence of the US in negotiations "can be evaluated as beneficial."

5.(C) Note: In an unrelated conversation September 25 with IRPO, an Iranian documentary filmmaker called Mohebbian's conservative credentials solid, albeit with a far more pragmatic outlook than other hardliners. The context of the conversation was a discussion about launching cultural exchange programs related to journalism. The filmmaker recommended starting by reaching out to conservative journalists and specifically mentioned Mohebbian as an ideal candidate. Endnote.

6.(C) Comment: While we cannot read too much into one article, Mohebbian's interview is noteworthy. Given that the press has clearly been told to refrain from the nuclear debate, Mohebbian likely got a green light for his statements.

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